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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/373,980	08/16/1999	ANDREW J. STIRLING	2425-8	3175

7590 02/05/2003

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EXAMINER

DO, NHAT Q

ART UNIT PAPER NUMBER

2663

DATE MAILED: 02/05/2003

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/373,980

Applicant(s)

STIRLING ET AL.

Examiner

Nhat Do

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- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address -

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 26 November 2002.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 66-89 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 66-89 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 16 August 1999 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- 11) ☐ The proposed drawing correction filed on _____ is: a) ☐ approved b) ☐ disapproved by the Examiner.
- If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.
- 12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 13) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☒ None of:
1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
- a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 15) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☒ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) 6.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). _____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

Priority

1. Acknowledgment is made of applicant's claim for foreign priority based on applications filed in Great Britain in 1997, and PCT application filed in 1998. It is noted, however, that applicant has not filed a certified copy of the application as required by 35 U.S.C. 119(b).

Specification

The following guidelines illustrate the preferred layout for the specification of a utility application. These guidelines are suggested for the applicant's use.

Arrangement of the Specification

As provided in 37 CFR 1.77(b), the specification of a utility application should include the following sections in order. Each of the lettered items should appear in upper case, without underlining or bold type, as a section heading. If no text follows the section heading, the phrase "Not Applicable" should follow the section heading:

- (a) TITLE OF THE INVENTION.
- (b) CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS.
- (c) STATEMENT REGARDING FEDERALLY SPONSORED RESEARCH OR DEVELOPMENT.
- (d) INCORPORATION-BY-REFERENCE OF MATERIAL SUBMITTED ON A COMPACT DISC (See 37 CFR 1.52(e)(5) and MPEP 608.05. Computer program listings (37 CFR 1.96(c)), "Sequence Listings" (37 CFR 1.821(c)), and tables having more than 50 pages of text are permitted to be submitted on compact discs.) or
REFERENCE TO A "MICROFICHE APPENDIX" (See MPEP § 608.05(a). "Microfiche Appendices" were accepted by the Office until March 1, 2001.)
- (e) BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION.
 - (1) Field of the Invention.
 - (2) Description of Related Art including information disclosed under 37 CFR 1.97 and 1.98.
- (f) BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION.
- (g) BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE SEVERAL VIEWS OF THE DRAWING(S).
- (h) DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION.
- (i) CLAIM OR CLAIMS (commencing on a separate sheet).
- (j) ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE (commencing on a separate sheet).
- (k) SEQUENCE LISTING (See MPEP § 2424 and 37 CFR 1.821-1.825. A "Sequence Listing" is required on paper if the application discloses a nucleotide or amino

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acid sequence as defined in 37 CFR 1.821(a) and if the required "Sequence Listing" is not submitted as an electronic document on compact disc).

Application should have been rewritten following the suggested layout.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

2. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

3. Claims 67-70, 72-75, 79-82, 84-87 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

Regarding to claims 67, 72, 79, 84, based on the specification, the data frame structures of the high rate segment and the low rate segment have the same data for control information (Fig. 9, and 10). However, the data rates for control information are not constant because of different transmission rate between two segments. Therefore, the limitation "data rate for control information being constant between the first and the second segments" should have been changed to 'data for control information being constant between the first and the second segments'

Claims 68-70, 73-75, 80-82, 85-87 are indefinite since the claims depend on claims 67, 72, 79, 84 respectively.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

4. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person

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having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

5. Claims 66-89 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over the admitted prior art in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,661,720 to Taniguchi.

Regarding to claim 66, 70, 75, 78, 82, 87, Admitted prior art disclose a communication network comprising:

A plurality of stations interconnected by data carrying segments so as to form a ring network (Fig. 1);

A master station generates frame structure (Specification 16, line 13). Therefore, it is inherent the network interface at each station must be synchronized with the master clock at the master station in order to transceive data/audio data.

Each station comprises a network interface for transmitting data from a station to the network segment (Fig. 2);

Admitted prior art fails to disclose at least two stations in the system operate between a first segment having higher data rate and second segment having lower data rate. Taniguchi discloses a ring system with at least two stations at node C, and B having network interface 18 that operates between a first segment 61 having higher rate and second segment 62, and 63 having lower data rate (Fig. 10, 11). A skilled artisan would have been motivated to reconfigure the conventional ring taught by admitted prior art as a ring network described in figure 10 by Taniguchi in order to, firstly, provide an alternate path when there is a failure of a line as taught by Taniguchi, and secondly, add extra data slots to the frame structure described by admission (Fig. 6) to increase the capacity of the segment having higher data rate in case more stations are added to the segment or vice versa. Therefore, it would have been obvious to a person having

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ordinary skill in the art by the time the invention was made to further modify the system disclosed by admission by connecting at least two stations in the system operate between a first segment having higher data rate and second segment having lower data rate.

Regarding to claims 67, 72, 79, 84, 85 after combining as described in the rejection of claim 66, it is inherent that the data for control information is the same and data rate for the user information is different between the first and the second segment.

Regarding to claims 68, 73, 80, the modification as described in the rejection of claim 66 is just about changing the frequency but not frame period. Therefore, the frame period in both segments is the same after modifying.

Regarding to claims 69, 74, 81, 86, the frame described by admission conveys control bits forming part of a control message frame (Fig. 5, and 6).

Regarding to claims 71, 83, after combining as described in the rejection of claim 66, it is inherent there is a network interface in the system that operates, in a mixed-speed mode, to transmit data on the outgoing segment at a data rate different to the rate of data received on the incoming segment.

Regarding to claims 76, 77, 88, and 89, Admission discloses the network interface comprises a source or destination of audio data (Fig. 1, and 2).

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Nhat Do whose telephone number is (703) 305-5743. The examiner can normally be reached on 8:30 AM - 5:30 PM Monday - Friday.

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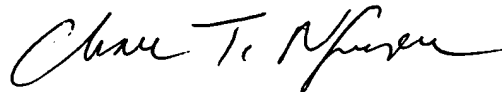
If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Chau Nguyen can be reached on (703) 308-5340. The fax phone numbers for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned are 703-308-6743 for regular communications and 703-308-6743 for After Final communications.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is 703-305-3900.

Nhat Do
Examiner
Art Unit 2663

ND

January 31, 2003



CHAU NGUYEN
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER
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